Food Security

641. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether is a fact that India is more malnourished today than it was in 1947;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the per capita availability of pulses has declined sharply from 78 gram per day at the time of independence to 40 gram per day at present;

(c) whether the question of food security was discussed in national symposium held in the capital from 17th to 19th April, 2001; and

(d) if so, what are the details of the decisions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) It is not correct to say that India is more malnourished today than it was in 1947. At the time of independence clinical manifestations of various nutritional deficiencies like Beri Beri, Pellagra, Keratomalacia, Kwashiorkor and marasmus were widely prevalent. The near total disappearance of florid nutritional deficiency disorders, which were once major public health problems in India, has been remarkable experience.

(b) The per capita availability of pulses has declined from 60.7 gms/day in 1951 to 32.0 gms/day in 2000.

(c) A National Consultation on "Towards Hunger Free India" was jointly organized by the Planning Commission, the World Food Programme and MS Swaminathan Research Foundation in New Delhi between 24—26th April, 2001. The discussion during the consultation revolved around the question of ensuring food security to all in India.

(d) The National Consultation was held mainly to ascertain the views of experts on the question of food security. The different technical sessions as part of the Consultation deliberated upon the themes of (i) food availability and vulnerability to national disasters (ii) food absorption and utilization and (iii) sustainable livelihood and economic access to food.

MSP for Tur Dal in Karnataka

642. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to pay minimum support price to Tur Dal

farmers of Karnataka, as extended to other States; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) The Government fixes each season the minimum support prices (MSPs) for major agricultural commodities including tur (arhar) and the MSP fixed for tur (arhar) for the 2000-2001 crop is Rs. 1200 per quintal. The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED), which is a designated Central Nodal Agency, is required to intervene in the market and undertake procurement of tur (arhar) whenever market prices fall below the MSP. The MSP fixed by the Government are uniform throughout the country.

Special recruitment under Agricultural Scientist Recruitment Board

643. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government took any decision for special recruitment under the Agricultural Scientist Recruitment Board;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the details regarding the special recruitment;

(d) whether Board has appointed any scientists without Ph. D. Degree; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has requested the Agricultural Scientists' Recruitment Board (ASRB) to conduct a special examination for filling up vacant posts of Scientists in the North-Eastern and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

(c) Not Applicable.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. Since the minimum essential qualifications for the post of Scientist at the entry level is Post Graduate degree in the relevant discipline.